

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /058 W

-----142123Z 036540 /67

R 141550Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2760

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, VT, SP, IT

SUBJECT: KING CARLOS'S VISIT TO VATICAN AND ITALY

1. KING CARLOS'S FEBRUARY 9-11 VISIT TO VATICAN AND ITALY WAS VERY SUCCESSFUL. THE ALREADY WARM RELATIONS BETWEEN VATICAN AND SPAIN WERE SOLIDIFIED. IN ADDITION, WHILE SECURITY MEASURES WERE EXTRAORDINARY, THERE OCCURRED NO SIGNIFICANT ANTI-SPANISH DISTURBANCES AND, SURPRISINGLY, THE GOI RECEPTION OF KING WAS MORE CORDIAL THAN ENVISIONED. GOS SHREWDNESS IN ANNOUNCING RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS WITH USSR ON EVE OF VISIT PERHAPS ACCOUNTS FOR BOTH GOI CORDIALITY, LACK OF DISTURBANCES FROM FAR LEFT AND A GENERALLY FAVORABLE MEDIA COVERAGE.

2. KING CARLOS' THREE-HOUR LONG OFFICIAL VISIT WITH POPE PAUL FEB. 10 SOLIDIFIED THE ERA OF GOOD FEELINGS IN VATICAN-SPANISH RELATIONS WHICH WAS USHERED IN WITH KING'S DRAMATIC ACTION LAST YEAR IN BREAKING THE DEADLOCK OVER THE REVISION OF THE 1953 CONCORDAT. THE KING AND THE POPE BOTH MADE VERY FAVORABLE REFERENCES TO THE CONDITIONS WHICH MADE POSSIBLE THE REVISION OF THE CONCORDAT IN JULY 1976 AND THE IMPORTANCE TO SPAIN OF HARMONY IN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS. THE POPE EXPRESSED:

-APPROVAL OF MOVES IN SPAIN TOWARD "MULTIPLE FORMS OF PROGRESS";

-APPRECIATION FOR THE KING'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE REVISION OF

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THE CONCORDAT; AND

-ENCOURAGEMENT FOR FURTHER MOVES TO OVERCOME "RECENT TENSIONS" AND FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF A "JUST ANCIAL ORDER" IN SPAIN.

WE BELIEVE VISIT WILL HAVE POSITIVE EFFECT IN ASSURING CONTINUED SUPPORT FROM THE SPANISH HIERARCHY FOR FURTHER LIBERLAIZATION IN SPAIN AND ADDITIONAL FRUITFUL NEGOTIATIONS ON CHURCH-STATE ISSUES.

3. THE GOI'S ATTENTIVENESS TO THE KING WARMED CONSIDERABLY AS THE VISIT PROGRESSED. GOI ON EVE OF VISIT WAS PRIMARILY PREOCCUPIED WITH SECURITY PRECAUTIONS AND ONLY SECONDARILY ON EVENTS IT MIGHT SPONSOR DURING KING'S VISIT. THUS THE ONLY ITALIAN EVENT CON-TEMPLATED ON EVE OF VISIT WAS A QUIET DINNER TO BE OFFERED BY PRESIDENT LEONE. IN ACTUALITY, HOWEVER, THE FEB. 10 DINNER BECAME A PUBLICLY NOTABLE AFFAIR ATTENDED BY THE PRIME MINISTER, OTHER HIGH GOI OFFICIALS AND THE PRESIDENTS OF THE TWO CHAMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND THERE WAS EXTENSIVE TV COVERAGE. IN ADDITION, PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI CALLED ON THE KING FEB. 11 FOR A BRIEF TALK, AND FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI WENT TO THE AIRPORT FOR THE FAREWELL CEREMONY (THIS CONTRASTS WITH KING'S ARRIVAL WHEN ONLY VATICAN SUBSTITUTE SECRETARY BENELLI WAS PRESENT.)

4. PRESIDENT LEONE IN HIS TOAST TO KING STATED THAT ITALIANS WERE "VERY SATISFIED" WITH KING'S REFORM MEASURES AND EXPRESSED HOPE FOR "FULL SUCCESS OF KING'S POLICY TO ASSURE TO SPAIN A BRIGHT FUTURE AND TO EUROPE SPANISH COOPERATION FOR PEACE AND DETENTE." THE KING RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT "IN THE CREATION OF A UNITED EUROPE, OUR CONTRIBUTION WILL NOT BE LACKING." ACCORDING TO GOI OFFICIAL THE KING AND PRESIDENT LEONE EXCHANGED IDEAS ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AND THAT LEONE PROMISED ITALIAN SUPPORT FOR "INTEGRATING" SPAIN IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND CLOSE COOPERATING ON MEDITERRANEAN ISSUES. MINISTRY FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIALS WHOM WE HAVE CONTACTED TOLD US THAT THEY WERE NOT AWARE OF ANY SPECIFIC AGREEMENTS REACHED.

5. THE ITALIAN PRESS WAS GENERALLY FAVORABLE TO KING'S VISIT AND SYMPATHETIC TO KING'S POLICIES. KING'S SYMBOLIC GESTURE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EXCHANGING GREETINGS WITH RAPHAEL ALBERTI, A SPANISH COMMUNIST POET IN EXILE, RECEIVED SIGNIFICANT ITALIAN MEDIA ATTENTION.

6. COMMENT: WHILE KING'S VISIT TO VATICAN TOOK PLACE WITHIN A VERY FRIENDLY CONTEXT AS ENVISIONED IN ROME 1873, THE KING'S RECEPTION BY THE GOI WAS UNEXPECTEDLY CORDIAL. THE TIMING OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS WITH USSR APPARENTLY ENCOURAGED BOTH A MORE CORDIAL GOI ATTITUDE TOWARDS SPAIN AND THE KING AND ALSO A FAVORABLE TREATMENT IN ITALIAN MEDIA. AS FAR AS VISIT TO GOI WAS CONCERNED, THE WARM ATMOSPHERICS WERE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE LACK OF SPECIFIC AGREEMENTS. THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SCENE VIS-A-VIS SPAIN EVOLVED WITH SURPRISING RAPIDITY, PERMITTING THE GOI TO TENDER HONORS TO THE KING AND QUEEN WHICH WERE IN MANY RESPECTS APPROPRIATE TO AN OFFICIAL VISIT DESPITE THE "UNOFFICIAL" LABEL PURPOSEFULLY EMPLOYED THROUGHOUT VISIT.BEAUDRY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CHIEF OF STATE VISITS
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ROME02403
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770052-0638
Format: TEL
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770244/aaaabmux.tel
Line Count: 112
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4658cec6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3327380
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KING CARLOS'S VISIT TO VATICAN AND ITALY
TAGS: PFOR, VT, SP, IT, (JUAN CARLOS I)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4658cec6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009